

## **GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM**

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# **Strategic Communication Plan 2000-2003**



**One Gulf of Mexico ...  
one community to protect it.**

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# Strategic Communication Plan

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# Strategic Communication Plan

## Gulf of Mexico Program Mission

Facilitate the protection and restoration of the coastal marine waters of the Gulf of Mexico and its coastal natural habitats; to sustain living resources; to protect human health and the food supply; and to ensure the recreational use of Gulf shores, beaches and waters in ways consistent with the economic well-being of the region through a network of citizens and institutions.

## Communications Committee Mission

Professionals from the Gulf region, communicating the value of our nation's largest body of water - the Gulf of Mexico.

## Our Communications Goal

Foster regionalized stewardship, community and value among people to protect, restore, and responsibly use the resources of the Gulf of Mexico.

To achieve this goal, we've identified **six key objectives**:

1. Adopt and promote a graphic image and identity for the Gulf of Mexico as a unifying symbol of one, dedicated community.
2. Establish key Gulf of Mexico Messages.
3. Develop appropriate means to highlight and honor stewards of the Gulf of Mexico.
4. Gain national awareness and recognition of the Gulf of Mexico region's value to the nation.
5. Provide communications support and expertise to the focus groups.
6. Create and/or support communications networks in the 12 priority watersheds.

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Objective 1:

**Adopt and promote a graphic image and identity for the Gulf of Mexico as a unifying symbol of one, dedicated community.**

Targeted Completion Date: On or Before April 9, 2000

Specific Messages:	The Gulf of Mexico is economically valuable, aesthetically beautiful, environmentally important, and has a rich cultural heritage. We have only one Gulf of Mexico and need to be one united community in protecting it.
Specific Audience:	Mass general audience - regionally, nationally, and internationally.
Measurement Indicators:	Number of stakeholder groups who actively use the image. Actual number of documented uses - web sites, publications, etc Circulation of publications using the image.
Resources Available:	Test market image through existing agency web pages. Informal market testing by communications committee members.
Resources Needed:	Money for development by graphic artist (\$2,500 prize money for art contest and @ \$500 for consultant's assistance in organizing, laying out and designing the contest. @ \$6,000 for promotional/distribution/printing Expenses
Task 1-1:	Gaye Farris will head an ad hoc work group comprised of Jennifer Griffin, Susan Childs, and Terry Smith. This group will establish a detailed timeline and process for this objective and report progress to the communications committee at the September 20, 1999 meeting in Biloxi, Miss.
Task 1-2:	Unveil the new image in January or February 2000 to the Management Committee and seek agreement from all Gulf of Mexico Program partners to use the unified image.
Task 1-3:	Once approved by the Management Committee, obtain approval and support from the Policy Review Board for the widest possible use of the image by all Gulf of Mexico Program partnering agencies and organizations.

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Objective 2:

**Establish key Gulf of Mexico media messages.**

Targeted Completion Date: July, 2000

Specific Messages:	The Gulf of Mexico is economically valuable, aesthetically beautiful, environmentally important, and has a rich cultural heritage. We have only one Gulf of Mexico and need to be one united community in protecting it.
Specific Audience:	Mass general audience - regionally, nationally, and internationally.
Measurement Indicators:	Number of times the messages are used in speeches, news releases, and other documents. Circulation of publications using the messages.
Resources Available:	Talking points from state and federal agencies.
Resources Needed:	Talking points from state and federal agencies. @ \$500 to reproduce slide presentation
Task 2-1:	CC members will bring with them to the September 20 meeting any fact or talking points about the value and protection of the Gulf of Mexico. Terry Smith will then draft a working paper of Gulf of Mexico Program talking points for review and approval by CC members. CC-approved talking points will then be forward to the Management Committee for final approval.
Task 2-2:	Once the talking points are approved by the Management Committee, either Terry Smith or a yet to be determined ad hoc work group of the CC will develop a power point briefing on the Gulf of Mexico that incorporates the talking points. The final power point briefing will be available to all partners (including the Gulf States, the State and Federal government agencies, private CEOs, members of the Citizens Advisory Committee) to use in reaching centers of influence in the 12 priority watersheds. Target date for completing and distributing the power point briefing is July 2000.

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## Objective 3:

**Develop appropriate means to highlight and honor stewards of the Gulf of Mexico.**

Targeted Completion Date: First annual winners ceremony held in conjunction with the Gulf of Mexico Mobile Symposium in April, 2000.

Specific Messages:	We are one community with one valuable Gulf of Mexico to protect. Individually we are making a difference to the entire Gulf ecosystem.
Specific Audience:	Mass general audience - regionally, nationally, and internationally.
Measurement Indicators:	Number of "Gulf Guardians" recognized each year. Number of print articles and circulation of the publications that write articles about Gulf Guardians. Number of broadcast news stories about Gulf Guardians. Audience size of the particular broadcast show running story.
Resources Available:	Possible in-kind services from partnering Gulf of Mexico Program agencies organization for graphic design, printing, and distribution costs.
Resources Needed:	@ \$100,000 annually, based on other successful, environmental awards programs. This figure includes the in-kind services mentioned above and any contributions received from business and industry. A more clearly-defined budget will be presented to the Management Committee at the October 26 and 27, 1999 meeting in Galveston, Texas.
Task 3-1:	CC members will forward sample awards programs to Andy Saenz, chair of an ad hoc work group comprised of David Gray, Susan Childs, Tom Balou, Jay Gamble, and Terry Smith, by July 15, 1999.
Task 3-2:	The ad hoc group will meet in Austin August 11, 1999 to develop a process and model to present to the Management Committee for approval at the October 1999 Galveston meeting. The process model, and timeline will then be added to this plan and also given to the MC members in Galveston in late October.

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Objective 4:

**Gain national awareness and recognition of the Gulf of Mexico region s value to the nation.**

Targeted Completion Date: On going, but would like play in five national outlets during first 18 months of plan s operation.

Specific Messages:	The gulf supports the nation's economy. XX states have rivers and streams whose waters eventually find their way to the Gulf of Mexico. 31 states have rivers and streams that drain into the Mississippi River and then into the Gulf of Mexico. Of these 31 states, only five are Gulf Coast states.
Specific Audience:	Major media (print and broadcast), and major conferences.
Measurement Indicators:	Media coverage of stories and news releases. Attendance numbers at conferences. Video news releases produced and aired. Audience size of broadcast program airing VNR.
Resources Available:	Media contacts of CC members and CC member's knowledge of conferences.
Resources Needed:	@\$50,000 for series of VNR's (paid by Gulf Program Office) \$2,500 to get question about Gulf in National Roper Poll @ \$50,000 for contract media specialist for Gulf of Mexico Program public affairs office (funded by Gulf Program Office). @ \$25,000 per year (\$5,000 each event) to send the GMP exhibit to five key conferences/events identified by the CC. \$100,000 seed grant money from the Gulf of Mexico Program and up to \$10,000 in grant money from Federal agencies and other program partners, as well as in kind services to support the Gulf of Mexico Symposium 2003 in Biloxi MS. \$20,000 annually for annual Shareholder Report \$40,000 annually for Gulfwatch. \$20,000 by January 2000 to update GMP display at NASA Visitor Center
Task 4-1:	Produce and distribute a series of video news releases on Gulf of Mexico Program projects throughout the 12 priority watersheds.

Series will be called "Eye on the Gulf." Individual VNRs will be compiled into a 30-minute documentary type video and unveiled at the 4th Gulf of Mexico Symposium in April 2000 in Mobile.

- Task 4-2: Sell a Gulf issues story to five major national media outlets during an 18-month period. David Gray and Dee Stewart will work with their contacts and investigate; report results to CC at September 1999 Biloxi meeting.
- Task 4-3: Build a calendar of environmental events and prioritize which events can best communicate the Gulf of Mexico message (national forums include: Coastal Zone 2001, Coastal Ventures, National Estuarine Federation, Environmental Council of States, National Governor's Association, National Science Writers, North American Association of Environmental Educators). Terry Smith will develop a form for listing these events and post it on the web site for CC members to download, complete, and fax. CC members will look at composite list in January 2000 to determine which forums are most advantageous.
- Task 4-4: Ask Roper, who conducts a national, annual survey on environmental attitudes in the United States, to include a Gulf of Mexico question in the next national poll. David Gray will contact the organization and make the initial inquiry. He will report to the CC on progress at the September meeting.
- Task 4-5: Continue with the Gulf of Mexico Symposium in April, 2003. This symposium will be held in Biloxi MS and will result in each state having hosted one symposium over the last ten years. The symposium is important to bring Gulfwide issues to the attention of the nation. Graphic images and awards programs will be carried through at this symposium. Resource needs identified above.
- Task 4-6: The Gulf of Mexico Program should continue to produce an annual Shareholder Report. Approximate cost to contract this project out is \$20,000, plus printing costs.
- Task 4-7: The Gulf of Mexico Program should revamp the Gulfwatch publication through a request for proposals for grant money or as an interagency agreement. The new Gulfwatch should contain the graphic identity identified in objective 1 and distribution should be carefully targeted to reach key centers of influence. The publication should be produced at least quarterly with perhaps



one or two special issues. The Gulf of Mexico Program should continue to support this through \$40,000 grant awarded annually.

Task 4-8:

The Gulf of Mexico Program should join their on-site host, NASA, in updating their visitor center with new displays about the value of the Gulf of Mexico. Approximate cost of updated display is \$20,000. EPA Region 6 gave the program \$5,000 toward this goal, which must be completed by February 2000.

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Objective 5:

**Provide communications support and expertise to the Gulf of Mexico Program focus teams.**

Targeted Completion Date: CC representatives to the focus teams were elected in January 1999. Other facets of this objective are an on-going process.

**Specific Messages:** The CC is a group of professional communicators from the Gulf region. Our individual jobs involve communicating the value of our nation's largest body of water - the Gulf of Mexico. To do that we must interact closely with the Gulf of Mexico Program focus teams working to keep the Gulf healthy and productive. In this way, the focus teams can share their needs with the communicators, and communicators can identify a communication tool to solve an identified problem.

**Specific Audience:** Gulf of Mexico Program focus teams and members.

**Measurement Indicators:** Number of products produced for and approved by the focus teams.

**Resources Available:** Communications Committee members and their respective agencies (in terms of travel money and time to attend focus team meetings).

**Resources Needed:** Commitment from Management Committee and Policy Review Board members to support the travel and time requirements of CC focus team representatives.  
Resource needs to support specific products will be developed in response to focus team needs.  
\$45,000 per year for a GS-9-11 federal positions or equivalent contractor position in the Gulf of Mexico Program Office, Public Affairs, to coordinate and oversee educational needs of the focus teams.

**Task 5-1:** Elect a member of the CC to be a participant in each of the four Gulf of Mexico focus teams. Note: this action was completed at the January 1999 meeting.  
Jay Gamble is CC rep. to Habitat Focus Team.  
Belinda Duke is CC rep. to Nonindigenous Focus Team.  
Jennifer Griffin is CC rep. to Public Health Focus Team.

- Task 5-2:                      Gaye Farris is CC rep. to the Nutrient Enrichment Focus Team. CC Focus Team representatives will update the CC on focus team communication needs at each of the CC meetings and by email or telephone conference call if a specific focus team need dictates action prior to the CC team meeting. As a result of the recently-completed meetings between the States and the Gulf of Mexico Program, the following assistance is sought from the Communications Committee and identified in the Gulf of Mexico Program Work Plan. Several of these need proposals written on them and on several, our communication committee member for that particular agency will need to provide more specific details.
- Habitat Project:            Develop and implement communications/public education campaign for Mobile and Pensacola Bay areas on the importance of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAVs). Campaign should be adaptable Gulfwide. **(MB.5, MB.7, and PB.3)**
- CC Action:** *Form ad hoc work group to determine resource needs, timetable, and campaign. Group to meet prior to next CC meeting.*
- Habitat Project:            Develop and implement communications/public education campaign for Mobile Bay area on the importance of beach and dune restoration and protection. Campaign should be adaptable Gulfwide. **(MB.6)**
- CC Action:** *Form ad hoc work group to determine resource needs, timetable, and campaign. Group to meet prior to next CC meeting.*
- Pub. Health Proj:            Develop and implement communications/public education campaign for the use of pumpout stations and voluntary use of on-board waste containment systems, specifically for the Lower Suwannee River, but adaptable Gulfwide. **(LSR.4 and LSR.6)**
- CC Action:** *Form ad hoc work group to determine resource needs, timetable, and campaign. Group to meet prior to next CC meeting.*
- Pub. Health Proj:            Develop a technical transfer road show highlighting problems with coastal sewage, detailing model sewage ordinances, and emphasizing the need for smart growth planning. Campaign should be adaptable Gulfwide but for initial use in Mississippi and Louisiana. **(MS.7 and BTB.17)**
- CC Action:** *Form ad hoc work group to determine resource needs, timetable, and campaign. Group to meet prior to next CC meeting.*
- Pub. Health Proj:            Work with the ISSC to develop a communications strategy for high risk consumers of shellfish.

**CC Action:** *Terry Smith and/or Jennifer Griffin will contact the ISSC CC contact for this and see how the CC can add value to their process and product. They will form an ad hoc work group or conduct other appropriate communications once more information is available. Members with existing pamphlets on subject should forward them to Jennifer Griffin and/or Terry Smith.*

Pub. Health Proj: Develop and implement communications/public education campaign for beach monitoring, adaptable Gulfwide.

**CC Action:** *Form ad hoc work group to determine resource needs, timetable, and campaign. Group to meet prior to next CC meeting.*

Nonindigenous Pr: Develop communications plan to educate the public about using native plants. Plan should include brochures on exotic species and target landscape plants and aquatic species. The focus team would also like a poster of the 10 Most Wanted Exotic Species. The team also seeks assistance in promoting workshops geared to nursery owners and the general public on the use of native plants in landscaping. **(BTB.5)**

**CC Action:** *Belinda Duke, as the nonindigenous species representative will work with the focus team to determine specific needs and form and ad hoc group accordingly. CC members with existing nonindigenous educational materials should forward them to Belinda Duke to see if existing materials can be used.*

Mobile Bay  
NEP Project:

Joe Strange of Mobile Bay NEP will determine specific ways the CC can support implementation of the CCMP Outreach Plan for Mobile Bay. **(MB.17 and MB.20)**

**CC Action:** *Joe Strange will report to the CC at the next CC meeting specific ways the CC can assist in implementing the CCMP Outreach Plan for Mobile Bay.*

Tampa Bay  
Project:

Florida has requested financial assistance in the amount of \$5,000 to increase environmental awareness and promote eco-friendly programs for the citizens of the Tampa Bay area via the Pinellas County Enviro Fair. It is unknown at this time what their need is from the CC. **(TB.9)**

**CC Action:** *Nanette Holland of the Tampa Bay NEP will report to the CC at the next CC meeting specific ways the CC can assist with this project.*

Sarasota Bay

Project: Florida has requested unspecified assistance from the CC in conjunction with the Midnight Pass Study in Sarasota Bay. **(SB.3)**  
**CC Action:** *Diane Murray of the Sarasota Bay NEP will report to the CC at the next CC meeting specific ways the CC can assist with this study.*

Corpus Christi Bay

Project: Develop and implement communications/public education campaign for Corpus Christi Bay on the purpose and results of on-going freshwater projects and programs. Campaign should be adaptable Gulfwide. **(CCB.3)**

**CC Action:** *Mercedes Salinas of the Corpus Christi Bay NEP will report to the CC at the next CC meeting specific ways the CC can assist with this effort.*

Corpus Christi Bay

Project: Corpus Christi Bay requested assistance from the CC in providing information on species of concern in animal rescue and rehabilitation. **(CCB.8)**

**CC Action:** *This request does not appear to fall into one of the Gulf of Mexico Program focus areas. Mercedes Salinas of the Corpus Christi Bay NEP will report to the CC at the next CC meeting the specific needs here and whether or not the request is a public health, habitat, nutrient enrichment, or nonindigenous species issue.*

Alabama-Coast-

wide Project: Alabama (ADECA) has requested support from the Gulf of Mexico Program in implementing their environmental education and outreach programs. **(AL.18)**

**CC Action:** *Clark Bruner will report to the CC at the next CC meeting specific ways the CC can assist in implementing ADECA environmental and outreach programs .*

Barataria-Terrebonne

NEP Project: Bayou Loufourche has requested support in developing/ implementing the following programs:  
Anti-litter and Adopt a Road and Bayou Campaigns **(BTB.15)**  
Development of Eco-tourism Programs **(BTB.16)**  
Sewage Treatment Education Program Development **(BTB.17 and MS.7)**  
Newspaper and Billboard Campaigns **(BTB.20)**

**CC Action:** *Initial CC action is to secure a new representative from the BTBNEP to serve on the CC. Then this member can lead ad hoc*

*work groups to begin development of campaigns that don't specifically tie into Gulfwide issues. Whenever applicable, all campaigns should be adaptable Gulfwide.*

Louisiana-Coast-wide Project:

Louisiana has requested the support of the CC in developing and implementing an education campaign regarding the potential benefits of diversions to restore and/or preserve coastal wetlands. They need assistance in elevating this to a national concern.

**(LA.3)**

**CC Action:** *To be a national concern, we must first show it is a Gulfwide concern. Therefore recommend Catherine Arnold as co-chair of the CC and each of the four other state representatives on the CC form an ad hoc work group to come up with a communication plan which all CC members will rally behind and promote.*

Task 5-3:

The Gulf of Mexico Program should hire a full-time education specialist to work in the Program Office to oversee educational campaigns and needs of the focus teams. This position should be in place by 2003 could be as flexible as a three- or six-month developmental public affairs specialist position where different agencies could send someone from their organizations to work temporarily at the Gulf Program office. (@\$45,000 per year)

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Objective 6:

**Create and/or support communications network in the 12 priority areas.**

Targeted Completion Date: Initial network complete by July 2000, but this is an on-going objective that will need continuous updates.

Specific Messages: When a message needs to get out, this network will provide the most expedient means of doing so. The network will also identify when local community issues and solutions can be highlighted and linked to the broader Gulf of Mexico.

Specific Audience: Communications Committee and their network

Measurement Indicators: List completed  
Number of times list used.  
Effectiveness of network when used (are materials used?)

Resources Available: Communications Committee members

Resources Needed: Input from Communications Committee members.

Task 6-1: Identify communications tree for each of the 12 priority areas by July 2000.  
Provide list of counties in 12 priority areas to CC members.  
Obtain media list from CC members in counties relevant to their respective areas of responsibility.  
Obtain contact information for county supervisor in the 12 priority areas.  
Obtain contact information for environmental leaders in the 12 priority areas.  
Obtain contact information for the Chamber of Commerce offices for each of the counties within the 12 priority areas.  
Obtain contact information for the Tourism and Economic Development offices in each of the 12 priority areas.  
Obtain contact information for the fishing industry within the 12 priority areas.  
Obtain contact information for the agriculture industry within the 12 priority areas.  
Obtain contact information for major industries and federal and state offices (including the oil and gas industry) within the 12 priority areas.

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Action Table

DATE DUE	WHAT S DUE	SEND TO/POC??	WHO DOES THIS?
15 July	Send sample Environmental Awards Programs to Saenz; schedule ad hoc work group meeting	Andy Saenz (512) 239-5018	Any CC member with benchmark programs. Andy Saenz, David Gray, Susan Childs, Tom Ballou, and Terry Smith
Late July or early August	Schedule meeting of ad hoc work group to develop process for graphic image creation and adoption	Gaye Farris (318) 266-8550	Participants: Gaye Farris, Jennifer Griffin, Susan Childs, and Terry Smith
30 July	Talking points, media messages, Gulf facts	Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	All CC members with existing messages and quick tips or facts ( did you know that kind of info)
15 August	Develop a form for CC members to list environmental events/conferences with which they are familiar. Put form on web.	Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	CC members will complete forms and bring completed forms with them to the 20 Sep meeting.
15 August	Begin creating communications network in the 12 priority areas. Terry Smith will develop a form for CC members to complete .	Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	CC Members
15 December	Return completed forms on communications network to Terry Smith	Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	CC Members
20 September (at the meeting)	Complete/final CC approval of strategic communication plan	Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	CC Members



<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>WHAT S DUE</b>	<b>SEND TO/POC??</b>	<b>WHO DOES THIS?</b>
20 September	Report on Habitat Focus Team Meetings/Efforts	Jay Gamble (504) 862-27886	Jay Gamble
20 September	Report on Nonindigenous Species Focus Team Meetings/Efforts	Belinda Duke (800) 741-9978	Belinda Duke
20 September	Report on Nutrient Enrichment Focus Team Meetings/Efforts	Gaye Farris (318) 266-8550	Gaye Farris
20 September	Report on Public Health Focus Team Meetings/Efforts	Jennifer Griffin (601) 961-5726	Jennifer Griffin
April 2000	Maximum exposure of new image at Gulf Symposium	Gaye Farris and Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	Ad hoc work group
April 2000	Unveil first-ever Gulf Guardian Award-Winners	Andy Saenz and Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	Ad hoc work group
July 2000	Develop power point briefing with Gulf key messages	Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	Terry Hines Smith
June 2001	Five major media stories on Gulf efforts	Terry Hines Smith (228) 688-1159	CC Members

Note: As separate communication plans are developed for focus team needs, specific action tables will be developed for those plans and added to this plan as attachments.

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Review and Approval Tracking

Sent to Communications Committee for Final Approval:	September 20, 1999
Approved by CC:	September 20, 1999
Sent to Gulf of Mexico Program Director for Approval:	September 21, 1999
Approved by GMP Director:	
Sent to All Gulf of Mexico Program Focus Teams for Information:	September 28, 1999
Sent to Management Committee For Review:	September 28, 1999
Approved by Management Committee:	October 28, 1999

# Strategic Communication Plan

## Attachment 1 - Summary of Financial Needs (In Thousands)

Obj	Task	Description	One Time	2000	2001	2002	2003
1	1-1	Art Contest Prize; Consultant	3				
1	1-3	Distribution/Publicity/Printing for Image	6				
2	2-2	Reproducing disk/cd for pp slide brief		1	1	1	1
3	All	Gulf Guardian Awards Program		100	85	85	85
4	4-1	VNRs 12 Priority Water Areas in Gulf		50	50	50	50
4	4-3	Send GMP Exhibit to 5 annual conventions		25	25	25	25
4	4-4	Gulf Question in Roper Environmental Poll	2.5				
4	4-6	Annual GMP Shareholder Report		20	20	20	
4	4-7	Grant for Gulfwatch Newsletter		40	40	40	
4	4-8	New Exhibit in NASA Visitor Center	20				
4	All	Contract Media Relations Specialist GMPO		50	50	50	
5	5-2	Govt/Contract Ed. Specialist in GMPO		45	45	45	
4	4-5	Gulf of Mexico Symposium (2000 in Mobile and 2003 Biloxi)		100 150			100 150
5	5-2	1 campaign per focus team/year		100	100	100	100
		Funded by GMPO	20	260	160	160	260
		Deficit	11.5	421	271	271	421
		TOTALS	31.5	681	431	431	681

Figures do not include salary of GS-12 public affairs specialist and contract web master currently staffing the public affairs office of the GMPO for the Gulf of Mexico Program.